

Considering One Another In Demolishing Strongholds

2 Corinthians 1:3-11

3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God. 5 For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort abounds through Christ. 6 If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer. 7 And our hope for you is firm, because we know that just as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our comfort.

8 We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters,[a] about the troubles we experienced in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired of life itself. 9 Indeed, we felt we had received the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. 10 He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us again. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us, 11 as you help us by your prayers. Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favor granted us in answer to the prayers of many.

1. Why does God allow suffering in my life?

A. God has given me free will.

You can choose good or bad, right or wrong, evil or life. God says you can reject me or accept me. It's your choice. Why?

God desires a love relationship with us. And love is not love unless it's freely given.

B. God has given others a free will.

Those of you who have been hurt deeply by someone else. God could have prevented that hurt from happening to you. All He would have had to do would be take away

that person's free will to do wrong. But if He had done that, to be fair, He would have to have taken away your free will

too.

C. God uses pain to get my attention.

Pain is a warning light, a buzzer, an alarm. It says, "Something's wrong." Pain's not our problem. Pain is a symptom of our problem.

"The pain caused you to repent and change your ways." - 2 Corinthians 7:9 (NLT)

"When I had lost all hope, I turned my thoughts once more to the Lord." - Jonah 2:7

D. God uses suffering to teach me to depend on Him.

"We were crushed and overwhelmed beyond our ability to endure, and we thought we would never live through it. In fact,

we expected to die. But as a result, we stopped relying on ourselves and learned to rely only on God . . ." - 2 Corinthians

1:8-9 NLT

D. God uses suffering to equip us to minister.

God allows pain in my life to give me a ministry to others. It makes me humble, sympathetic, sensitive to others' needs.

This is what this step is all about. Yield myself to God to help other people. The truth is pain prepares us to serve.

i. How people normally think.

2. How can God use my pain to help others?

"Then (Jesus) said to his disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest,

therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.'" - Matthew 9:37-38 (NIV)

A. Be available.

If God is going to be able to use my pain to ministry to others, I must be available for Him to use me. I must be willing to

be a worker in His harvest. The greatest ability in life is availability.

B. Be praying.

Jesus said to pray not only for workers, but for workers to be sent. If I am available to be a worker for Christ, then this

should be my prayer, we are all workers in the harvest. We should pray for one another.

We are all dealing with strongholds. We sometimes forget this truth. Part of "Loving God and Loving One another" is being sensitive and praying for others' battles. Not just our own. This is also instrumental in us overcoming and demolishing them.

C. Be ready.

"Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have." - 1 Peter

3:15 (NIV)

Think through the story of you and your God and be ready to share it.

i. What about those that were raised as strong believers and feel as if they don't have a story to share?

D. Be expecting.

If you get ready to share the good news about God of how God has worked in your life, God will use you to minister to

others. There are people who need to hear your story all around you, who are going through what you've gone through.

Let's commit ourselves to one another. Not just in attendance on Sunday and Wednesday, but in gluing ourselves one to another.